

Sam Houston Monument

PUBLIC ART COLLECTION IDENTIFICATION SUMMARY



Number: 0018

Artist: Cerracchio, Enrico Filberto (1880 - 1956)

Title: Sam Houston Monument

Date: 1924, Unveiled August 16, 1925

Type: Sculpture

Medium: Sculpture: Bronze, Base: Gray Granite

Dimensions: Sculpture: approx. 20' x 20' x 9', Base: approx. 25' x 18' x 9', Plaques: front 24" x 19 7/8" x 3/8"; rear 12 1/4" x 15 3/4" x 3/8 "

Foundry/Fabricator: Roman Bronze Works, NY

Location/Environment: Hermann Park, Outdoors

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Sam Houston Monument

Historical Background

On March 1, 1917, an article appeared in the Houston Chronicle calling on Texans to come together and raise the money necessary to erect a monument commemorating Texan hero and statesman, General Sam Houston. The Women's City Club raised the funds for this monument and commissioned Enrico Cerrachio as the sculptor. He is shown on horseback leading his men into the battle of San Jacinto, which the monument is positioned to point towards.

Physical Description

The *Sam Houston Monument* is a colossal, chased surface, equestrian, bronze sculpture that rests on a triumphal, fine grained, granite arch. The inner walls of the arch are tiled with small square glazed ceramic tiles and bronze plaques are mounted on the interior faces of the abutments. The plaza surrounding the granite arch is composed of multi-colored, broken rubble marble tiles with Portland cement mortar grouting.

The sculpture depicts Houston, sitting atop of a striding horse, wearing 19 th century military attire and a flowing cape. Houston points to the right with his outstretched proper right arm with his upper body and face twisted to his proper left. Cerracchio depicted the horse in motion by raising and detaching the front left and back right legs from the base and its head bent downward. The artist's signature (*E. CERRACCHIO SC . 1924*) appears on the left, rear-vertical edge of the sculpture's base. The foundry mark (*CAST BY ROMAN BRONZE WORKS NY*) is on the right, rear-vertical edge.

The masonry arch was constructed by Frank Teich (1856-1939). It is constructed of large dressed and carved blocks of fine grained gray granite that are centered on top of a matching granite pedestal and surrounded by an irregularly tiled marble plaza. Steps descend from the plaza in both directions which allows a visitor to pass through the arch. *Sam Houston* is inscribed, in relief, on the pedestal's front and back surfaces. The names of the stone company (*TIECH MONUMENT WORKS*) and artist (*ENRICO CERRACCHIO SCULPTOR*) are inscribed on the stair banister's left and right vertical edges.

The plaque on the rear abutment of the arch reads as follows:

"WOMEN'S CITY CLUB/ UNVEILED/ AUGUST 16, 1925/ MARKER PLACED/ APRIL 1962." The front, and larger, plaque reads: "DEDICATED IN HONOR/ OF GENERAL SAM HOUSTON/ BORN MARCH 2, 1793 IN ROCKRIDGE COUNTY/ VIRGINIA/ DIED JULY 26, 1863 NEAR HUNTSVILLE, TEXAS..." (continues w/ a chronology of Houston's life).

Restoration/Conservation

In 1996, the Houston Municipal Art Commission (MAC) launched an innovative and ambitious program to restore and maintain all municipally owned art works. For both historical and sentimental reasons, the *Sam Houston Monument* was chosen as the Commission's first project and at the age of seventy-one, was given a much needed face-lift. A celebration showcasing the newly restored monument was held on September 5, 1996.